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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 06 BAGHDAD 004328

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SY](#) [IQ](#)
SUBJECT: TALABANI SAYS SYRIA READY TO HELP IN IRAQ;
SHORTENS TRIP TO IRAN

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: In a meeting on November 21 with the Ambassador Iraqi President Jalal Talabani expressed the conviction that Syria is ready to help secure and stabilize Iraq. He shared a plan drawn up by Vice President Adil al-Mahdi to encourage cooperation among political blocs in an effort to solve many of Iraq's contentious issues. He said SCIRI leader Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim expressed frustration with Iran and there is a growing frustration among Shia with Iran. He also gave a brief readout of his trip to France. Minister of Water Abd al-Latif Rashid, who also attended the meeting, spoke briefly on major issues in the Kurdish Region. END SUMMARY.

Syrian Foreign Minister Tells Iraq: "We Want to Help"

12. (C) Iraqi President Jalal Talabani expressed his view to the Ambassador on November 21 that the Syrians are ready to help secure and stabilize Iraq. He said Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem admitted Syrian support for the Baath party in their meeting in Baghdad earlier in the week but claimed that Syria was now ready to do "whatever Iraq asked." Talabani said he told Muallem that it was in Syria's interest to support the Iraqi Government and take a public stand against those fighting against Iraq. Talabani said he believed that the Syrians are sincere in their interest in working with Baghdad and said Muallem had even asked Talabani to query the Ambassador about the possibility of reviving the US-Iraq-Syria partnership. Talabani said he had emphasized to Muallem that the key to this partnership was stopping terrorism in Iraq and that the US could not tolerate the continued killing of its soldiers. The Ambassador responded that a true indication of Syrian willingness would be an actual improvement in the situation on the ground in Iraq.

13. (C) Talabani agreed with the Ambassador that we need actions, not words from Syria. He added that in any-carrot-and-stick approach toward Syria, it is also always important to emphasize the stick. Talabani suggested that just as everyone seemed to be asking for a timeline for US withdrawal, so the US should ask for a timeline from Syria and Iran as well. He urged against any policy of appeasement towards either country, opining that Iran is "very comfortable right now" because its influence has increased and it thinks democracy in the Middle East is finished.

Adil al-Mahdi's "Historic Contract"

14. (C) Talabani said Vice President Adil al-Mahdi has drawn up a broad-ranging "Historic Contract" which calls for cooperation among political blocs and lays out solutions for many of the problems facing Iraq (see para. 9). He said this plan has his support and that Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi is in general agreement with it as well. (NOTE: In a subsequent conversation, Hashimi expressed reservations with the plan. END NOTE.). The Ambassador asked how this fits with Hashimi's alleged statement threatening to withdraw from the government and take up arms. Talabani dismissed it, saying Hashimi denied making this statement. He said everyone is frustrated, but this is an opportunity for change. He urged clarity in the in U.S. policy toward the Sunni. At the same time, he stressed that the Sunnis cannot speak two languages - the language of government and the language of "occupation." Likewise the Shia cannot speak the language of government and of militias. He emphasized reaching agreement with all Iraqi groups. Talabani expressed his view that the Iraqi decision-making body -- including the Maliki government -- was "simply not working." This needed to be fixed. The President and the Ambassador agreed that the emergency meeting of the bloc leaders on Friday provided the opportunity to focus on these issues.

Hakim, Shia Frustrated with Iran; Talabani to Visit

15. (C) According to Talabani, SCIRI leader Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim visited him on November 20 to express his frustration with Iran. The Iranians are playing a dangerous role in Iraq, he said, and are sacrificing the Iraqi Shia for their own interests. Talabani stated that Hakim accused Iran

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of encouraging and conspiring with the Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) militia. Talabani said everyone is worried about Iran because they are responsible for the problems in Iraq. He said there is a growing frustration among Shia with Iran. Iran does not want Iraq to be secure and is using it against the Arab world. He told the Ambassador Adil al-Mahdi has gone to Iran to issue three demands: stop financing JAM, work with the Iraqi government, and stop helping terrorists come into Iraq.

16. (C) The Ambassador expressed concern about Talabani's own upcoming trip to Iran. Talabani said he could not cancel it but he agreed to shorten it to two days - from November 25-27. He mentioned that Syrian President Bashar al-Asad refused an invitation for a trilateral meeting in Tehran because the Syrians believed it would harm relations with the US.

Trip to France, Problems in the Kurdish Region

17. (C) Talabani said during his recent trip to France he received pledges for help in the United Nations and for the counterterrorism training of 1500 Iraqi forces. He said he had asked Prime Minister Maliki to follow up on this. He met three members of the French socialist bloc and had to convince them to support Iraq. When asked about oil issues, Talabani said of course they discussed them but deferred most of the discussion to the respective Oil Ministries. He also met the head of oil and gas company Total.

18. (C) During the meeting Minister of Water Abd al-Latif Rashid briefly discussed problems in the Kurdish region. He expressed dissatisfaction with the state of the hydrocarbons law and said that demand for goods in the Kurdish region is very high and they are getting expensive. He said there is an electricity shortage in the region and mentioned negotiations with Turkey over establishing mechanisms for importing and downgrading electricity and changing wattages.

Text of Adil al-Mahdi's "Historic Contract"

¶9. (SBU) The following is the translated text of the "historical contract":

Milestones for solving the Iraqi Crisis or the Political Initiative or the Historic Contract

First: The Forces that are part of the solution who may participate in the Initiative

1 - Nationally:

¶1. All or some of the "Alliance" and the forces outside of it whether Islamic or non Islamic such as Al-Iraqiya or other national blocs.

¶2. The Kurds with both their parties.

¶3. The Tawafuq Front, the Islamic Party, the Muslims Scholars Association, the Baath of Iraq, the tribes and independent leaders.

¶4. All these forces, some of them, or in addition to them which approve in an absolute and real manner the principles stipulated below in "What does the solution aim at".

2 - Regionally:

Neighboring countries in addition to Egypt, the Emirates, the Arab League, and the Islamic Conference.

3 - Internationally:

¶1. The United States, Great Britain, and the International Coalition forces

¶2. The European Union.

¶3. China and Russia.

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¶4. Japan, Korea and Australia.

Presupposed Options

¶1. Going back to the way things were before March 2003

¶2. Canceling all of the past whether before March 2003 or after it. Start negotiating again in order to identify and define the new Iraq which everybody agrees on.

¶3. The prolonging of the current crisis and the ramifications, the killing, the death, and the destruction it might lead to that threaten everybody without exception.

¶4. The retreat of each side onto itself and sketching its own expectations of its territories, geography, and population; Meaning, to walk towards partition.

¶5. Finding the heavy weights amongst the desiring forces capable of moving forward from the current situation of the political status quo toward achieving the goals below, in order to strengthen sovereignty, combat terrorism and violence, put the political process, economic reform and constitutional requirements on the right track; and in order for the Political Council to play its role in overseeing, rationalizing and opening to any political proposal that would help to increase participation, interaction and

solutions and would respect the constitutional guidelines and democratic principles. This is the option that we believe will receive the backing of the overwhelming Majority and reflects the best interest of the country.

What does the solution aim at?

¶A. Build a just and well guided State that cares for all its citizens; not founded on partisan or sectarian or ethnic or community allegiances; protects Islam and does not allow for any infringement of it; protects individual and communal rights as stipulated in the First and the Second sections of the Constitution.

¶B. Adopt democracy in such a way that every citizen has one vote; the interests of different communities are protected with Constitutional legislations based on the Federal system; respect for pluralism in all its forms; balanced distribution of interests and rights between centralization and decentralization.

¶C. Adopt the Constitution voted on by the Iraqi people as a basis for continuing the process of political building, provided that amendments are done in accordance with the approved mechanisms and national agreements.

¶D. Deal with effects of the past with all its ramifications and oppressions.

¶E. Look at the present-day and the future when dealing with the past and do not remain confined to its framework.

¶F. Seek general historical resolutions that allow for overcoming the compositions and understandings of the past and the opposition mentality. Enter the domain of the governing national responsibility and the international responsibility that are part of the policies and decision making of the region and the world in a peaceful, united and just manner.

¶G. Regional and international equilibrium in defending the interest and sovereignty of Iraq. Believe that the new Iraq is established on amity with the various nations and countries and that making enemies and sharp edged policies are remnants of the previous state of things. Be open-minded to the surrounding world, the regional and outside world, and deal with them positively and cooperatively.

Consequently, we can point to what we consider to be key milestones for a historical political initiative or for foundational contract between the Iraqis:

¶1. The Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds (and others of course) shall assume the responsibility of security in their areas, single-handedly or jointly, based on the situations within a circle of legislated frameworks agreed to between the forces

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on one hand, and a circle of the governmental solution within and not outside the contexts of the State's work on the other hand.

¶2. The joining of the political forces that comprise the key components of the political process in the decision of providing security for the citizen and country is key for preventing the emergence of militias on one hand, and benefiting from the nation's capacity on the other hand. There exists a comprehensive outlook in that regard.

¶3. Develop the general view concerning the sovereign, regional and joint authorities according to the principles stipulated in the Constitution or amend it pursuant to the mechanisms suggested therein.

¶4. Combat terrorism, Al-Qaeda, and the Islamic emirate and

other hostile formations.

¶5. Combat any formations, courts, and authorities that are outside the framework of the rule of the State and the Law.

¶6. The Saddamist Baath shall be banned in accordance with the Constitution.

¶7. All militias and local armies shall be disbanded. Commence disbandment, integration and conformation processes. Combat the phenomena of carrying of weapons. The rule of law shall be imposed. The government shall be the sole entity carrying weapons.

¶8. The De-Ba'athification law shall be annulled in accordance with the Constitution after the execution of Saddam, if the Cassation Board issued a decision to proceed with the execution. This must be understood openly and implicitly; the Iraqi Baath is not originally included in the law. Going back to the minutes of the Governing Council sessions on this issue point to this fact.

¶9. Displacement shall be prohibited. Criminals shall be pursued. The local forces shall be responsible for any acts of displacement and killing for sectarian, ethnic or political motives. The displacement which took place after and before the fall of the regime does not constitute a basis for the application of the statute of limitations and for these unlawful acts to be accepted.

¶10. Oil resources fall under the authority of the federal government. Oil revenues and its distribution can be used to reach settlements that help in accepting the other principles and fundamentals that are disagreed on.

¶11. Regions and Governorates shall be given broad powers to grant lands, authorize investments and issue permits in accordance with the Investment Law. The rights and powers of the Regions shall be clearly defined; Disorderliness or independence that harms the Federal State are not allowed; Control by the Federal Government that impedes the work of the local governments is not permitted.

¶12. In order to curtail any disagreements concerning centralized and decentralized issues, it is possible to present the issues as follows: Centralization in regard to oil resources and decentralization in regard to investment and the economy.. Centralization in regard to political, sovereignty, foreign relations and national legislative affairs. And decentralization in administration, rights and legislation in defining the powers of the Regions and Governorates. Decentralization in regard to the citizen's security and centralization in regard to National defense.

¶13. A general Amnesty shall be issued except for those referred to the Iraqi Special Tribunal and Private Law.

¶14. The current Constitution, the Federal System and democracy shall be accepted as a permanent system for Iraq.

¶15. The COR shall be established on the basis of one vote for every citizen according to an approved electoral system.

¶16. The formation of the "Federation Council" shall necessarily mean on the one hand that the COR expresses the will of the people according to the one vote for each citizen; it will also mean on the other hand, the acceptance of pluralism and the communities preserving themselves and their private and public rights. A right balance shall be set

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between these two institutions and their roles so that these balances do not impede the work of the Federal Government. Nor shall the COR or the Federal Government or its institutions impede the work of the local governments and the rights of the different communities in the country. The

basis of all this shall be the acceptance of the Federal system with all its different Regions, otherwise we have two options, either democratic rule according to one vote for every citizen whose majority decides the balance of forces .. or control, domination or partition. The federal option is the balanced and unifying option which joins together these two components.

¶17. It is possible that the Federal system and regions be established out of two or more regions. The issue of Kirkuk and the rest of the disputed territories can be solved within that framework. It is also possible that it would be formed out of a number of regions, that alternative remaining available. The period of the eighteen months can be used to reach an agreement that would satisfy the different sides.

¶18. The Constitution, the Laws of parliamentary blocs and Elections, are keen to encourage lists that lead to the forming of the government out of a national majority that circumvents quotas and the delay in choosing a Prime Minister and Ministers. It also allows for a widening of the circle of competition outside the sectarian and ethnic polarizations. It permits the formation of shadow governments where competence and concurrence are preserved without those governments concealing or discrediting the work of parties and political entities.

¶19. Political activity is prohibited in the Government agencies.. the basis of employment is competence and not party, community or ethnic allegiances.

¶20. The National Equilibrium Committee approved by the Constitution will complete its work in accordance with the population equilibriums, in justice, and achieving progress in the work of the State towards greater competency, responsibility and the understanding of public service.

¶21. Article 140 will be applied concerning the boundaries of the governorates and Kirkuk; the issue of the areas in dispute shall be solved.

¶22. Governorate elections will take place at the same time that the vote on forming new regions will take place and it is preferable that it would happen in June 2007.

¶23. The plan for economic reform will be adopted.

Third: International Issues, the MNF and pending issues,

1) As soon as the political and security situation is organized between the Iraqi forces and the supporting regional and international forces, then the timing of the withdrawal of the MNF from Iraq will be identified. Those dates will be decided in line with the overall national best interest and in a principal agreement with the American and the British sides. The Iraqi Government will be able to decide the shape of those remaining forces or whether it wishes to ask for their help.

2) Relations and agreements will be regulated with the countries of the region on the one side and the United States and Great Britain on the other; This will be for the purpose of increasing the capacities of Iraq and for defending its interests, supporting it, as well as defending its independence and sovereignty against any outside interference whether regionally or internationally. The signing of security agreements with another State does not rule out the signing of similar agreements that all together will defend the internal security and the sovereign, national and security rights of Iraq. Such a view will help create a balance between our international and regional relations which sense contradictions that affect our situation in an exceptional manner; This requires in this regard a fresh Iraqi perspective.

3) A security agreement shall be organized during the remainder of the mandate of the MNF that will regulate Iraqi

sovereignty as well as the responsibilities and the authorities of the two sides.

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4) All terrorist organizations shall be eliminated from the Iraqi territory, such as Mujahedeen Khalq, the PKK, or any organization that wants to make of Iraq's territory a battleground to wage war against neighboring countries or to carry out terrorist actions.

5) Provide help to Iraq to cancel out Iraqi debts in a final manner.

6) The work of the Development Fund of Iraq shall end and the money will be moved to Iraq's treasury.

The issue of compensation shall be settled either by ending it in a final manner, or at least by establishing an Iraqi Kuwaiti Fund for investing in Iraq and for making use of investment money as an alternative to the principle of compensation.

END TEXT.
KHALILZAD